



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE SERVICES
1500 Jefferson Street SE, Olympia, WA 98501

**T12-RFQQ-014 for Information Technology Professional Services
Annual Refresh**

DATE: March 5, 2011
TO: All Potential Vendors
FROM: James W. Gayton, RFQQ Coordinator
SUBJECT: VENDOR QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Executive Summary:

This document is prepared by the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services (DES) and shall serve as the sole official reply to First-Round Vendor Questions submitted in response to RFQQ T12-RFQQ-014 released on February 17, 2011. Questions and responses are numbered for ease of reference only and are in no particular order or priority. Questions and comments have generally been stated as they were received except that some questions have been modified to maintain vendor confidentiality or to reduce redundancies. The answers may only explain or clarify some aspect that is already addressed in the RFQQ. Some of the answers may also supplement or change what was previously stated in the RFQQ or in an appendix. It is important that Vendors review all questions and answers.

General Information:

Vendors are advised to obtain and thoroughly review the complete, formal RFQQ. The RFQQ is located at: <http://www.des.wa.gov/services/technology-procurement-announcements>.

Vendor Questions and Official Answers

1. Do we need to acknowledge/incorporate the amendments of the RFQ (if any) along with the response?

Yes, you are required to acknowledge receipt of all amendments as indicated in Appendix A: Certificates and Assurances, and according to Section 4.1, in your Letter of Submittal.

2. Do we need to include the checklist in the proposal too?

No, the checklist is provided for your convenience.

3. Page 1 - Where is the Master Contract Number located to add into the form?

It is unclear what form is being referred to. For new contracts the Master Contract Number will be assigned after the announcement of Apparently Successful Vendors. For vendors on current Master Contracts, the existing Master Contract Number would be used.

4. Skill Category 1 – [OCIO] Feasibility Study Guidelines – Vendor has conducted feasibility study guidelines but not [OCIO] Feasibility Study guidelines- is this a disqualifier?
5. What is the disqualifying factor regarding the usage of the government used tools called out within the category vs. comparable tools experienced and used?
6. Within the different categories (ex 1-9); different tools are called out as a skills and experience; if vendor uses other comparable tools; would this disqualify the vendor? Must all called out tools be used and a pre-requisite for qualification?

No, vendors who only have comparable experience to what is listed in Appendix H, ITPS Technical Service Category Descriptions, will not be disqualified. However, as indicated in Section 5.4 “vendors who are able to identify the most extensive related experience will receive the highest evaluation scores.”

7. Appendix F- Reference- Is the process the following? Vendor fill out the top portion, send to the contact reference- Reference send the form to DES or would the reference send the form back to the vendor?

DES would prefer to receive the references with the proposal as a single packet. There isn't a required process, as long as all references are received by the submission deadline.

8. How does one find out if they are registered in the State-wide vendor registration payment? How does one get registered if they are not registered?

Vendors may call the Statewide Vendor Help Desk at (360) 407-8180 to determine their registration status and learn how to register.

9. [OCIO] Policy 303 R1- Category 3- Vendor has used other Quality Assurance policies; would this disqualify the vendor if the certain policy has not been used?

No, it would not disqualify a company. However, if a company is awarded a new contract, it will need to comply with all policies.

10. Once added to the Master Contract, are vendors required to re-submit a response each year thereafter to renew the eligibility on the Contract? Or, would this only be applicable if we

wish to qualify for additional categories and/or significant information has changed regarding our company?

11. Is this particular "Information Technology Professional Services Annual Refresh", RFQ # T12-RFQQ-014, is it open for all the vendors? Can we response to this proposal request?
12. Is this RFP is only for vendors holding any particular State Term Contracts?
13. We already have the current contract with the State of Washington (ITPS). Do we need to send a response to this RFP or will the contract get automatically renewed?

This RFQQ is available to new vendors and existing ITPS program contractors. If a vendor has a current Master Contract, no response to this RFQQ is required. If a vendor wishes to add new ITPS technical service categories or seniority levels, a full response for the new categories or seniority levels is required.

DES anticipates that amendments extending the term of current ITPS Master Contracts will be provided by early June 2012.

Next year, DES anticipates that new ITPS Master Contracts will be required for all vendors, which will require all vendors to submit a response.

14. How many vendors does the State anticipate adding to the Master Contract? How many vendors are on the Master Contract?

DES does not limit the number of ITPS vendors who may be awarded new Master Contracts.

15. Once a vendor is added and competes for work orders, will the decisions be based solely on cost/price?

Please refer to Section 1.10, Overview of Solicitation Process, regarding Second-Tier competitions for work orders. Evaluation and award of Purchased and Personal Services contracts is based on the policies and standards adopted by the State Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO).

16. On page 22 of the RFQQ, there is a statement that "Vendor must provide contracted personnel according to the Experience Levels shown below. Capability means that proposed contract staff would be ready to report to work within 15 Business Days from the date of interview and acceptance by Purchaser." This statement reads more like a staffing arrangement versus actual IT Professional Services and Project Work. Is the State looking to add vendors on the Master Contract under a pure IT Staffing Model, or can IT Professional Services companies be qualified? Can we propose individuals that would provide services from one of our solution centers in North America, or is there a requirement that the proposed personnel be available to work within the WA area?

IT Professional Services companies can be qualified. Master Contracts will be awarded to companies based on the criteria set forth in the RFQQ. Although there isn't an absolute requirement that all personnel be located in Washington, second tier requirements may include on-site personnel. Vendors do need to commit to have personnel in the state of Washington within 15 business days following acceptance of a vendor proposal by a purchaser.

17. When proposing personnel and providing resumes, we understand that we are required to provide names and that the personnel listed are expected to be available to work with the various agencies that will request services under this Master Contract. It is difficult to commit resources without knowing what projects are going to come out of this Master Contract or what the requirements will be in regards to timelines, deliverables, etc. Are vendors allowed to provide representative resumes of personnel we employ and replace those personnel if necessary depending on when the Work Orders are released?

*For the purposes of this RFQQ, as stated in Section 5.4.2, Resumes, vendors are required to submit at least one resume "describing the educational and work experiences for a candidate on Vendor's staff who **best represents** the Vendor's ability to provide highly qualified resources to the State." Staffing of work orders is an issue to be addressed with the Agency issuing the work request.*

18. Section 11, 3.8.5, This section requires that pages be numbered showing Response section and page number. Can the State please clarify what is meant by Response section? Should bidders provide their own section numbering?

Section numbers included in the response must be the same as the section numbers in the RFQQ.

19. Section 25, 5.4.2, This section refers to "Vendor's staff". Sometimes we agree to hire a staff only when awarded a contract. Does the State require that the resume be of a current employee or can Vendors provide contingent hire resumes?

Resumes submitted must be for current employees.

20. What is expected in the response to "5.3 (M) Experience Levels"? Do we list the number of staff available in each level?

In order to evaluate all vendor responses on a level playing-field, all responses to Section 5.3, Experience Levels, need to use the experience level descriptions provided. Vendors are not required to list the number of staff available for any particular seniority level, but vendors may include this information in their responses if they so choose.

21. If a staff member meets the requirements for "expert", I assume that individual qualifies in all of the lower levels as well. Is my assumption correct?

For the purpose of receiving a Master Contract, as indicated in Section 5.4.2, the vendor should submit a resume for the highest seniority level sought. Whether an individual qualifies for any particular level as part of a Second Tier competition will be determined by the Agency awarding a work order.

22. We are responding to a new category for our firm and have employees with strong qualifying experience in the category. My question is whether it is possible to acquire enough points in a category without vendor experience.

As indicated in Section 5.4.2, "each candidate for whom a résumé is provided must have provided at least one-hundred-fifty (150) billable hours of relevant services for Vendor

since January 1, 2009.” We can’t predict how evaluators will score any particular resume.

23. In some sections it is unclear what is expected as a response. For instance, Section 5.3 (Experience Levels) is marked as “Mandatory (M).” The description of a mandatory section is as follows: “**Mandatory**” or “**(M)**” shall mean the Vendor must comply with the requirement, and the Response will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis.” However, Section 5.3 does not ask for any response, it is simply a description of the Experience Levels. We see this same pattern in other sections in the RFQQ. What is the expected response from vendors to sections such as [5.3] where a response is noted as mandatory but no question or information is asked for? Can we ignore providing a written response to the section and simply follow the direction provided when putting together the Appendices/attachments described?

In these circumstances, the use of the designation “M” or “Mandatory” is meant is that the Vendor Response needs to meet the requirements listed or identified in that section. For example, Vendors need to use the qualifications listed in Section 5.3 when selecting a resume for inclusion in its response, and not substitute their own qualifications for a particular Seniority level.

24. There seems to be conflict in the RFQQ guidelines as to file format requirements. **Section 3** often states that an image or PDF format is required. However, **Appendix E** often states that an MS Word format is preferred. Can you clarify what is acceptable, and if we really need to scan in files, or can just use, say, MS Word. For instance: Section 3 of the RFQQ specifies: “Once completed and signed, the Letter of Submittal should be scanned into a separate file, in a .bmp, .jpg, .jpeg, .tiff, or PDF format, labeled as “**VendorName_ITPSLOS**” and saved as outlined in Appendix E for submission.” However, Appendix E states: Vendor’s signed Letter of Submittal (Subsection 4.1). Preferred Format: MS Word or PDF. File naming convention: **VendorName_ ITPSLOS.doc**. or **VendorName_ITPSLOS.pdf**. Expectation: One (1) file, labeled with the proper naming convention, & attached to the Vendor’s email submittal.

Documents that need to be signed by a representative of the Vendor should not be submitted in WMS Word format, but rather as a PDF or image. Appendix E is a checklist for the convenience of vendors. When there is an apparent conflict, Vendors need to comply with the format requirements set forth in Section 3 of the RFQQ.

25. In the Technical Project Experience and Resume section there is an expectation to have the file name in a certain format (2_LGConsulting_TECHPROJ.PDF). It also states the resume should be in a certain format as well but there is no example. Can you please provide an example of how you want the format to be?

*The Technical Project Experience and Resume should be included as a single document and the preferred naming format for the Vendor Technical Project Experience & Résumé is “**12_VendorName_TEC HPROJ.doc**”. For multiple category submission, use this naming convention including the appropriate category number each time.*

26. PP. 5.2.2. says: "Each Client Reference Form submitted for Vendor shall be from a unique reference. In no event shall the Vendor submit both references from the same client. If the Vendor submits both references from the same client, both references shall be disallowed

and zero evaluation points will be assigned to this portion of the evaluation. We have several contractors working on separate projects for the same state agency. If we provide Client Reference Forms from 2 managers for two different projects for the same state agency, is this considered Client Reference Forms from the same client or from 2 different clients?

For the purposes of the RFQQ, two references from the same agency will not be accepted.

27. Is there any eligibility criteria for vendors to respond to this particular RFP?

The eligibility criteria are detailed in the RFQQ.